



NEWS RELEASE

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE
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Census Provides Local Opportunities to Help Shape Farm Programs and Services *2012 Census of Agriculture Arriving in Mailboxes across New York*

Albany, NY, December 18, 2012 – Just as New York farmers are sitting down to make decisions for next year's growing season -- or finishing end-of-year farm paperwork -- the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [National Agricultural Statistics Service](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov) (NASS) is reminding them to complete and return their 2012 Census of Agriculture form.

Conducted only once every five years by NASS, the Census is much more than a count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. It is a look at land use and ownership, production practices, expenditures and other factors that affect the way farmers do business and succeed in the 21st Century.

"The results of the Census are used by companies, cooperatives, planners and lawmakers who serve New York farmers and communities – including federal, state and local governments, agribusinesses, trade associations and many others," said King Whetstone, Director of NASS New York Field Office. "Farmers and ranchers also use Census data to help make informed decisions about the future of their own operations."

Taking part in the Census is increasingly important to New York producers and communities because it provides a snapshot of the agriculture industry in every county of the state. This local information can affect policy decisions as well as influence community growth and development.

"The Census provides producers an opportunity to help shape farm programs, boost rural services and grow your farm future," added Whetstone. "Many companies review Census data when determining where to establish or expand their businesses, and even when looking for where they can go for supplies of locally-produced food and agricultural products – all examples that emphasize the importance of responding and supplying accurate Census information."

All New York farmers and ranchers should receive a Census form in the mail by late December. Completed forms are due by February 4, 2013. Farmers can return their forms by mail or online by visiting a secure website, www.agcensus.usda.gov. Federal law requires all agricultural producers to participate in the Census and requires NASS to keep all individual information confidential.

For more information about the Census, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov or call 1-888-4AG-STAT (1-888-424-7828). The Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility.

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